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OUR HONOR AND SHAME WITH JAPAN

BY WILLIAM ELLIOT GRIFFIS

IN 1800 and in 1801, American ships, from Salem, Massachusetts, serving as common carriers under the Dutch flag, entered the port of Nagasaki. The Stars and Stripes were then first mirrored in the waters of Japan. Simply by respecting the native traditions, Holland, in spite of much British misrepresentation, had held a commercial monopoly. The American captains sought for independent trade with the United States. Content with her prosperous isolation and fearing a second visitation of "The White Peril," Japan declined the proffer. Even in 1800 the Muscovite invasion was looming in the north; so the hermits kept their gates barred. The Yankees brought home only the dainty products of Nippon's craft and art, but our increasing interests in Hawaii, China, and on the then unpossessed Pacific coast made Japan a coveted object. Three Presidents—Jackson, Polk, and Fillmore—despatched missions to Yedo, to open trade.

Traditions of European statecraft toward Africa and Asia had hardened into dogma. This declared that continents inhabited by dark-skinned races were fields for kidnapping and loot. Asiatic peoples existed to be conquered and despoiled. Humboldt declared that the Isthmus of Panama, while uncut, was the real defense of Japan and China against Occidental greed.

The East India Company would not even allow Christian missionaries on the territory which it controlled. It was the systematic bribery by this corporation, with money made in China and India, that corrupted Parliament, gave ground for Walpole's (modified) axiom that "Every man has his price," and in 1775 provoked the American War of Independence. In 1807, Robert Morrison, the English scholar,

refused a passage in British ships, had to reach China by way of New York and Washington.

The people of the United States reversed this fixed European policy. When Secretary of State James Madison gave Dr. Morrison a letter of commendation to the American consul in China he virtually confirmed that policy of the "open door" already demanded by our merchants and sailors. For this, when Madison was President, they fought the War of 1812. Madison's policy meant the educational conquest of Asia. It was made a reality by our great army of skilled mechanics, physicians, teachers, and missionaries, whose schools, hospitals, dispensaries, churches, and congregations now belt the world from Tokio to Liberia, and from arctic to antaretic lands. Instead of the drum-beat is the school-bell.

When in 1823 John Adams, in response to the Czar's ukase claiming exclusive possession of the Pacific Coast of North America to the fifty-first parallel, informed the Russian Czar's envoy, Baron de Tuyl, that "we should contest the right of Russia to any territorial establishment on this continent," he unconsciously, perhaps, dictated the peaceful progress, through American influence, of China and Japan.

Yet Madison and Adams did not put on record what American pioneers and people had already declared, *viz.*: that the races of men exist not to be despoiled or conquered, but to be healed, helped, taught, and uplifted. The first century of American history beyond the Pacific is but an echo of what an Asiatic teacher enjoined when answering the question, "Who is my neighbor?"

Our first envoy to the Orient, Edmund Roberts, sent out by President Jackson, incarnated this idea. In China, after making treaties with Muscat and Siam, he died in 1836, at Macao, without seeing Japan, as he had hoped. He is fitly commemorated at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, where in 1905 the Russo-Japanese War was ended by peaceful diplomacy.

Roberts's work was followed up in 1839 by the American merchant C. W. King, of Macao, in the unarmed ship *Morrison*. With neither powder nor material for propaganda, he, also hoping for trade, sailed to Mikado Land with some Japanese waifs cast upon Oregon shores. The Yedo Government, then in terror of Russian aggressions and con-

fronted with the examples of conquered India and Java, and knowing not the American's motive, declined the suspected "gifts of the Greeks." Discouraged, but not in despair, Mr. King, pocketing his loss, wrote, "America is the hope of Asia."

In 1846 President Polk strove to lure into the world's market this Thornrose of the Pacific, but instead of going to Nagasaki, the legal entrance, the two war-ships anchored in the Bay of Yedo. The mission failed, the Japanese all the while wondering why Americans, who vehemently disowned the idea of conquest or interference in the domestic affairs of other nations, did not obey the law and go to Nagasaki. We know now that the cordon of guard-boats linked around foreign ships was even more to restrain native patriots eager for foreign intercourse than to curb the alien.

Occasional shipwreck of our whalers followed, but more often were the intrusions of mutineers and sea-wolves in human form. These unwelcome guests, coming in boats, with no ships in sight, were justly suspected of being Russian spies. Kept in custody before being returned to Java, the severe punishment meted out to native prisoners—the deprivation of a bath—had for them no terrors.

The record is now clear that when proper notice had been given, as in the case of Captain Mercator Cooper, of Hampton, New York, in the ship *Manhattan*, generous reception and unfailing courtesy to the stranger were the rule. Ronald Macdonald, of purpose a castaway, but acting as gentleman, was made the first teacher of English in Japan. He raised up interpreters for Perry, and when in America informed President Fillmore of the Nippon islanders' hunger for science and machinery. Fillmore's agent, Commodore Perry, in his diplomacy made his chief appeal to humanity—trade not being so much as mentioned. By his industrial exposition at Yokohama of the locomotive, telegraph, Webster's dictionary, Yankee inventions, agricultural machinery, and other things success was made sure, where broadsides and filibustering would have failed. Our marines and bluejackets made flowery tompions of chrysanthemums and azaleas, sticking them in their musket-barrels, while the natives used the universal language of smiles and laughter.

Thus three Presidents—Jackson, Polk, and Fillmore—sought Japan. Japan did not seek us. Townsend Harris,

the New York merchant and educator, our first envoy in Japan, by tact and conformity to polite usages won trade and residence. Fearing Japanese "treachery" and "cunning," French, British, and Germans, with infantry, cavalry, artillery, and engineers, retreated from their fortified legations in Yedo; but the American Harris, by simply following Japanese suggestions, without a gun, a soldier, or a sailor, kept the American flag flying.

All this time the Yedo Government, sternly repressing all interior intellectual freedom, misrepresented the true spirit of thinking Japan. Yet, excepting one request for postponement of the date of opening the ports, the treaties were kept to the letter. "It's a way" the Japanese have. Since 1868 the Imperial Government has been faithful in every diplomatic jot and tittle; yet though reconstructing—yes, Christianizing—their law courts and prisons and establishing a constitution, representative government and freedom of conscience, exceeding the average in Europe, sovereignty was denied until 1900. In all the new conventions between the United States and Japan, the last being signed February 21, 1911, repeated assertion of reciprocal rights and privileges, on the basis of equality with the "most favored nation" is made. As a nation and Government we signed a covenant which one State has violated.

Now is the test of our national character. We are confronted with the question as to the seat of power in the enforcement of "the supreme law of the land." A sectional agitation, in favor of a reversal of our ancient friendship and the violation of treaties has resulted, in one State, in a defiance of the Constitution of the United States. Our past history shows that the national capital has never been at Hartford, Charleston, Richmond, or Sacramento, but at Washington, D. C. The recent hostile anti-Japanese legislation in California—race hatred in its most immoral form—violates in spirit and letter the treaty with Japan, to which we promised the same treatment as to "the most favored nation."

It is not the business of a foreign nation making a treaty with the United States to inquire into the actual workings of federalism, its defects or advantages; or whether our National Government is too weak, morally or physically, to enforce a treaty obligation within a certain geographical area. No question is raised as to whether any nation or govern-

ment has, or has not, the right to keep out of her borders undesirable persons; or who shall or shall not become citizens. It is no matter whether Japan is pleased or displeased with our social or political system, or we with hers. As sovereign parties covenanting together, according to the laws of nations, the only question is that of good faith. To violate a treaty is to break the supreme law of the land and trample on the Constitution of the United States, which reads, in Article VI.:

This Constitution and the laws of the United States which shall be made in pursuance thereof, and all treaties made or which shall be made, under the authority of the United States, shall be the supreme law of the land; and the judges in every State shall be bound thereby, anything in the Constitution or laws of any State to the contrary notwithstanding.

In that august document no provision is more strongly safeguarded against any and all theories of federalism and State rights, and none is so immune from alteration, or the effects of attempted nullification, or secession, by States, judges, courts, legislators, and politicians.

A diligent perusal of the sectional speeches and writings of statesmen, so called, and of the Proceedings of the Asiatic Exclusion League, fails to reveal any sound reason why one State should nullify a national obligation. Such perusal has shown, however, that gentlemen, dependent upon votes and in the labor-unions (many members of which, Huns, Russians, etc., have more "Mongolian" blood in their veins than has the average Japanese) may be blinded by race hatred and colorphobia, especially when dominated by fears rather than facts. When racial antipathies rule, reason flies. The "history" so often appealed to and the ethnology expounded in California seem to be of a peculiarly local output. On this "hem of the handkerchief," between the Rockies and the Pacific, it is prejudice, animal instinct, and surmises, not reality, that control the situation. The student of the situation feels bound to challenge the truth of nine-tenths of the statements and the validity of most of these local arguments.

We Americans dragged Japan out of her enjoyable hermitage. As zealous as Macedonians were we in our cry, first to the Chinese, to "come over and help us." We wanted the Japanese badly and we invited them here. Alas, they have turned out to be so unlike the Christians we get from the most orthodox part of Christian Europe! These "very

respectable and full-handed farmers," as George Washington would have called them, do not patronize our liquor-saloons, or fill our almshouses and prisons, or buy our guns and pistols to kill, nor imitate our abominable manners and vulgar extravagance. On the contrary they are so wickedly zealous in reclaiming our waste land, so offensively industrious, and so shamefully eager to learn our language, read newspapers, patronize libraries and life-insurance companies, become builders and supporters of Christian churches (over fifty of which they have organized on the Pacific Coast) that we are on the brink of ruin through their cheap labor! Verily, with fewer than seventy thousand Japanese in the continental United States, "the hordes of Asia" are precipitating themselves on us to the overwhelming of free institutions!

The Exclusion League is the true child of the same dog-in-the-manger theories of the Know-Nothings. In 1850 I heard expressed concerning the Irish the same fears, uttered in 1913, about the "Mongolians." In later years, I remember how the Germans were misrepresented. As for the negroes, did any one teach or help them? Then the brutal question was flung at one—"Do you want your daughter to marry a nigger?" I have even heard of Jew-baiting. Cultivated ignorance seems now in order concerning the real Japan, which, as early as 1860, I suspected to be civilized, began to study in 1866, saw in 1870, and have ever since, through the individual, literature, art, and immigration, tried to understand.

Neither true Americanism, nor reason, nor law, nor fact, nor gospel forms the basis of the underlying hostility to the Japanese. "The Yellow Peril," "Asia's hordes," "the nine hundred millions waiting to precipitate themselves on our shores," the "tricky," "cunning," "unassimilable," "hopelessly pagan" Japanese, who "will never make good American citizens," or "ever forswear their allegiance," are non-existent. The "Oriental" of the picture shows, stage, novels, yellow newspapers, and "labor" agitators belongs with the dodo and phrenology, and is as unreal as the phantoms of cheese dreams or the crawling creatures of delirium tremens. "History" shows that these islanders, whose basic stock is Aryan, have ever been mobile, sensitive, and responsive to new ideas and situations. Whether in the sixth, sixteenth, or twentieth

century, they change for the better when opportunity arises. In fact, they will soon be as money-loving and as wasteful and extravagant as we are. In fundamentals their human nature is absolutely the same as that of their fellows in America who (if they could only see and hear themselves as some others do them) are just as tricky, cunning, and in reason's eyes often as ugly, morally and physically, as conceited, different in manners, and undesirable as "the Oriental." Like all other mortals, the Japanese are modified and transformed by new ideas, forces, and environment. In both scoundrelism and virtue they quite equal the Americans, now over a hundred million strong.

To the scholar, "our" civilization is an inherited composite of elements, most of which are Asiatic in origin, including our religion, which was taught us by a son of Asia. We are but the young dwarf on the old giant's back, and nine-tenths of our history is opportunity. Happily the members of the Exclusion League, while describing "our" civilization, have progressed in their vocabulary from "Anglo-Saxon" to "American"; but they still shout, "We are Caucasians." Yet in reality there is no "East" or "West." Now that the ends of the earth have met, the world needs as much true science as it needs the ethics and spirit of the Asiatic who answered the question, "Who is my neighbor." What every human creature of conceit and pride needs most is to see himself as others see him—how he looks, acts, and is offensive or attractive to his fellow-creatures; and we Americans need this discipline probably above all peoples. Men of other cults and civilizations are as proud and prejudiced as is the boasting (and usually the freshly naturalized) American, who screams "America for Americans!" The science of ethnology is one with the absolute religion of the Asiatic of Syria, in knowing of no one race that is inherently and permanently superior to all others. As a student of varied humanity, I am convinced that mine—the Teutonic—was once among the lowest.

The alleged objections to the Japanese have little weight in the light of actual knowledge and comparative study.

As to sense-impressions—we are just as beautiful and as ugly in the eyes of "Orientals" as they are in ours. The countenances of white people are associated, in the art of Japan and China, and with initial impressions, not with

angels, saints, or goddesses, but with imps and "the devil." We seem pale, ghostly, emaciated, brutally coarse, or demon-like, with our eyes of several tints set straight or far apart. The Occidental nose, in size, protrusion, uncanny variety of shape and often artificial rubiness, appears monstrous. The varied and nondescript colors of our hair, with its hideous departure from a standard black, is repulsive. Our voices seem shrill and unmodulated.

Being meat-eaters, we need only appeal to impartial canine judgment to learn wherein we differ from Asiatic or other humanity with pores. In neither personal cleanliness, popular courtesy, public hygiene, surgery, or medicine does Japan need instruction from Americans. In a comparison of manners and self-control as to tongue, temper, fingers, or fists, the average American suffers. Would that our people (109,000,000 of them) had the politeness so universal in Nippon!

After nearly fifty years' acquaintance with the Japanese, and two visits to California, as a student of "their" civilization and "ours"—in their origins and realities—I am of the opinion that we need "the Oriental" for our own advantage and improvement. I do not believe in the congestion of immigrants in one section, or in unregulated immigration. Naturalized, the Japanese is easily assimilable. No immigrant among us responds more rapidly to fair treatment. Nine-tenths of the hostile criticism of him is false. Give him a man's chance and he will take it. The unanimity of those who know him best on this point is surprising.

Even for our own ethical good, the Japanese Government is right in its insistence upon political justice and equality. We made a promise to treat the Japanese as well as we treat Germans or British folk. Independently of all dogma and creeds, and in any code of ethics, the man "who swears [even] to his own hurt and changes not" is moral, while the man, or Government, that breaks a treaty is pagan. The question "Who is my neighbor" cannot be dodged. Our hope for the future lies in holding to the faith of our fathers and not that of selfish politicians or "labor" unions.

The real question before the American people in regard to Japan is a moral one. Shall we keep faith and respect our own supreme law of the land? Shall we blot out the record of our ancient friendship at the dictation of one

State or class? Already the Japanese Government has shown itself willing to meet ours more than half-way. It cannot pay attention to or deal with a fraction of the United States—one-fiftieth of the whole. Nine-tenths of what Californians fear (as distinct from fact) can be settled by diplomacy.

None but a dreamer or a deceiver can hide the truth that underneath all lies the fundamental reality of racial antipathy. Yet without blinking one real fact in the case, whether in the surface-differences that strike the first attention of the vulgar, or the deep, underlying repulsions of the cultured, we Americans need the Oriental. In our country, where economics override morals, where art is an isolation, where fine manners are not yet valued as high as money, where filial piety is in its rudiments, where the historic sense is deficient, where rawness is a general characteristic, where spirituality is not profound, with a civilization that has been studied and appraised with only one-sided egotism and conceit rather than with judicial comparison, with a new territory that has been hurriedly exploited on the surface for dollars, rather than conserved to make a landscape beautiful and appealing, and with millions of acres of desert and unreclaimed land, we need the Orientals among us for our refinement and best development. Alas, that the average American is not educated enough to know his own ignorance, for he is least appreciative of that in which "the Oriental" excels.

Moreover, it may be that "Heaven's ordination baffles the human." Possibly the "little" brown man may not always submit patiently to insult, or yellow humanity eternally forgive and forget past centuries of injustice. Moreover, in view even of the European war thunders that have just crashed out of a clear sky, we may find both friendship and trade with Japan to be good national assets. In a large sense, this war of 1914 has grown out of the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05, which retarded Russia and allowed Germany to forge ahead on land and sea. Again, though Serbia and assassination have served as pretexts, the real goal and prize is possession of the path to Asia and its wealth.

It may be that Fillmore's policy of friendship may be better, and we may yet win, by common sense and righteousness, the rich markets of Asia for which Europe is even now fighting. There is a faint possibility, even, that the pre-

cepts of the Asiatic of Syria, the Prince of Peace, may be in the long run the best. A Power higher than governments "formed the earth to be inhabited."

At such a time as ours, three voices speak truths on this theme:

Count Okuma, Premier of Japan, not a Christian by stencil-plate, label, or seal of corporation, but full of the spirit of The Samurai of the Ages, who began his studies of man, history, and nations even before Perry's day, said to Americans in Tokio: "Diplomacy or law or statesmanship will not work in this case; the power of Christianity, the teaching of the brotherhood of all men and universal peace alone will save the threatening situation."

Along with this, let us place the faith of George Washington and probably that of a majority of intelligent Americans: "I believe that emigrants from other countries to this, who shall be well disposed, and conduct themselves properly, would be equally treated with equal friendship and kindness in all parts of it."

Only the spirit of the Universal Man, who, without a State, a Church, a nation, or a race to back him, and with priest, politician, and prejudice against him, sent forth his disciples to found a spiritual republic which shall survive all thrones and governments, can show us the shining way that means mutual good.

WILLIAM ELLIOT GRIFFIS.